1st April 1930]

Public Health

Reduction of the price of quinine.

*1809 *Q.*—Mr. J. A. SALDANHA : Will the hon. the Minister for Public Health be pleased to state—

(*a*) what steps Government have taken and propose to take for more extensive cultivation of Cinchona in this Presidency and how far the work of such extension has progressed ;

(*b*) whether Government have taken steps or propose to take steps to reduce the price of quinine sold in packets in post offices, and if so, by what extent the price is to be reduced and since when ;

(*c*) whether it is a fact that the price of quinine so sold is higher than the price of similar quinine sold in the Indian markets and what is the difference in the prices ;

(*d*) what further facilities Government have decided to provide or propose to provide for placing quinine within easy reach of the people by sale ; and

(*e*) which of the varieties of quinine sold by the Government have been ascertained and found by the Government Medical Department soluble in water or in water mixed with lime juice or such mixtures as are easily procurable by the people ?

A.—(*a*) Government have sanctioned a scheme for the plantation of 230 acres of land annually on the Anaimalais and they have reserved a large area there for the purpose. When this area is planted up it will provide enough quinine for the needs of the Presidency. Unfortunately, difficulties for example, in the incidence of disease owing to heavy rainfall have been encountered in the young plantations. About 1,000 acres will shortly be planted out and if the results from this acreage justify the expenditure, a speeding up of cultivation will be undertaken.

(*b*) & (*d*) Provision has been made in the Civil Budget Estimate for 1930–31 for selling quinine in 'treatments' at a reduced price of 5 annas per tube of 20 tablets of 4 grains each. It is proposed to give effect to the scheme from 1st July 1930.

(*c*) No. The price of quinine as fixed by Government is based on the market price ruling in India from time to time.

(*e*) Quinine sulphate which is the main drug sold by Government is readily soluble in water mixed with lime juice and similar acid preparations which are easily obtainable by the people. Quinine hydrochloride and Quinine bihydrochloride are soluble in plain water.

Mr. J. A. SALDANHA :—"With reference to answers to (*b*) and (*d*), the price of quinine even after reduction works out to Rs. 24 a lb. whereas the market rate is Rs. 16 May I know why it should not be further reduced ?"

The hon. S. MUTHIAH MUDALIYAR :—"By selling at that rate the Government lose Rs. 2 per lb."

Mr. J. A SALDANHA :—"May I know whether the market is not selling quinine at Rs. 16 per lb. ?"

The hon. Mr. S. MUTHIAH MUDALIYAR :—"I am not aware what the price to-day is."